

Rhodesia

Its Native Peoples Under British Rule

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"HAPPY," it was once cynically observed, "is the country which has no history," and, if this doctrine be true, Rhodesia should be the unhappiest of African states for, unlike most of the continent, it has a history stretching back to furthest antiquity.

The original inhabitants were the Bushmen, who have left their mark in the rock paintings found in the caves scattered over the country; but, unfortunately for them, a large proportion of their country was amazingly rich in gold, and a gold-bearing country has always been unhealthy for aborigines.

Some time before the days of Solomon there arrived on the scene one of the most fascinating races of early days, the Arabs of Saba or Sheba—a branch of the Phoenicians—who dispossessed the Bushmen and themselves worked the goldfields with such success that they flooded the known world until "silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon." They, too, left their traces—mighty forts, temples, and long-disused mines, the ruins of which constitute to this day some of the most interesting things in Rhodesia, and deserve a word to themselves.

The greatest is, of course, Zimbabwe (stone houses), in the Victoria District, the remains of a great city which once

sheltered enormous populations, who worshipped in the Elliptical Temple with its walls of granite narrowing up to a height of twenty-five to thirty feet, its solid conical tower and its great parallel passages, and who strolled about in the streets of what is now the Valley of Ruins, and gazed up at the mighty mass of buildings on the Acropolis which protected their city from savage inroads.

And now—

The Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and
drank deep.

And the very name of the local
Jamshyd is forgotten. There are few
more impressive or pathetic sights than



NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN RHODESIA

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neighbourhood of the capital, Livingstone, compete eagerly for the honour of being employed as canoe-boys to Government House. They make an exceedingly workmanlike appearance in the white jumpers, white shorts, and sailor collars that form the official uniform

Photo, British South Africa Company



BRAVES OF THE TANGANYIKA FRONTIER IN THE TRAPPINGS OF WAR

To the north-east of Northern Rhodesia lies Tanganyika Territory, formerly German East Africa, and on these marches wild tribes, mainly of Bantu type, hunt the game that still persists in these central fastnesses. The Bantus are highly skilled in the use of home-made but deadly lances, and in dressing for the fray their exaggerated headgear adds height and terror to their appearance

Zimbabwe, especially by moonlight, when the soft light filters through the cracks and holes of those once massive walls and softens the ruined outlines of what may once have been one of the greatest cities in the world.

Next in importance are the ruins on the Inyanga Mountains near the Portuguese border. Of a different character from Zimbabwe, they consist of stone enclosures, some as much as six miles across, on the hill-tops, open spaces probably used as temples below them, and pit-like buildings sunk in the ground with walls of huge stones and covered side passages. Probably they represent an earlier invasion of the

same people as built Zimbabwe; while the Khami ruins, on the other hand, and those about Insiza, belong to a later period.

It seems fairly certain that the Sabaeans held sway over an enormous part of what is now Rhodesia from about 2000 B.C. to 1000 A.D., until they were ousted at long last—the process must have taken several centuries—by the invasion of Bantu peoples from the north.

The Portuguese arrived at Sofala on the coast in 1485 and penetrated inland, chiefly along the Zambezi, but their hold on the interior was always precarious, and their downfall came in

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1760, to be followed by more than a century of savage inter-tribal warfare, lightened, towards the end, by the explorations of such men as Livingstone, who discovered the Victoria Falls in 1855, and died at Ilala in 1873.

Then came Cecil Rhodes, who built up the land which bears his name and added 440,000 square miles to the British Empire. In October, 1889, as a result of the treaty with Lobengula, King of the Matabele, a Royal Charter was granted to the British South Africa Company, by right of which the company ruled thereafter, opening up

the country with roads and railways, buildings, farming and mining, until to-day the whole vast area is peaceful and prosperous.

Modern Rhodesia is bounded by the Transvaal to the south, by Portuguese East Africa and Nyassaland to the east, by Tanganyika Territory and the Belgian Congo to the north, and by Portuguese West Africa and Bechuanaland to the west, and is subdivided by the Zambezi into two administrative districts — Northern and Southern Rhodesia. The first-named has an area of about 291,000 square miles and a



LIKELY CREW OF CANOE-BOYS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE

Fine watermen, knowing every trick and turn of the Zambezi, the North Rhodesian natives in the neighbourhood of the capital, Livingstone, compete eagerly for the honour of being employed as canoe-boys to Government House. They make an exceedingly workmanlike appearance in the white jumpers, white shorts, and sailor collars that form the official uniform

Photo, British South Africa Company



SUCCESSFUL SETTLERS ON ONE OF RHODESIA'S FRUITFUL FARMS

For those with a taste for the out-of-doors, a little capital, and patience, the settler's life in Rhodesia bears comparison with that in any of earth's pleasant places. The general land elevation is sufficiently great to make climatic conditions nearly always tolerable and often ideal for the European. The rains come during summer, while winter is dry and bracing, and agriculture is well rewarded

Photo, British South Africa Company



ASSEMBLED AT BULAWAYO FOR A TRIP TO THE MATOPPO HILLS

These motorists outside Bulawayo's Grand Hotel are about to make the eighteen-mile excursion to the National Park in the Matoppo. This is one of the popular trips from the town, which is Southern Rhodesia's commercial capital, and has some six thousand white inhabitants. On a hill in the Matoppo called "The World's View" sleeps Cecil Rhodes, who built up the land which bears his name



ANGONI SPEARMAN, SON OF ONE OF AFRICA'S FIERCEST TRIBES
 At various periods in the history of the Zulu peoples, there has been a tendency for sections to migrate northward and form powerful confederations. Among the most prominent of these separatists were the Matabele and Angoni, the latter famed for their bloodthirstiness and devastations. The Angoni warrior seen above with his tufted spear and hide buckler is a settler in Northern Rhodesia.

Photo, British South Africa Company



DRUM AND BUGLE BAND OF THE BAROTSE NATIVE POLICE IN RHODESIA

Near the Victoria Falls Station, on the Cape Town to Livingstone Railway, and within a short distance of the awe-inspiring chasm, is a headquarters of the Rhodesian Police. This force, formed partly of natives, with white officers and non-commissioned officers, has the responsibility of maintaining good order among the various tribes in the territory. The bandsmen in this case are Barotse, a people from what was formerly known as North-Western Rhodesia, now incorporated in Northern Rhodesia

native population of about 928,000; while Southern Rhodesia, which includes Matabeleland and Mashonaland, has an area of about 149,000 square miles and a native population of about 770,000, to which figures have to be added some 33,600 Europeans and a number of Asiatics.

Practically the whole of this enormous area is a high plateau. It is extraordinarily rich in minerals—gold and coal being the chief—and large portions are suitable for farming, though as far as cattle are concerned the position in Northern Rhodesia is complicated by the presence of “fly-belts,” the home of the tsetse, and over all nature has scattered her beauties with a lavish hand.

But Southern and Northern Rhodesia are two different countries; the one approximating to the conditions of the Union, the other, to those of Central Africa; the one a civilized land of railways, towns, and farms, the other, save where the Elizabethville railway bends its slow way northwards to Sakanian on the Belgian frontier, real, untamed African bush.

While the towns of Southern Rhodesia are civilized and well-planned, those of Northern Rhodesia are little more than up-country stations; indeed Livingstone, on the southern border, and Abercorn, tucked away in the extreme north, are the only real towns it possesses. But, in Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo, Salisbury, and Umtali are all places of considerable importance, with Gwelo and Victoria not far behind. Of these, though Salisbury is the



PHYSICAL PERFECTION OF NEGRO WOMANHOOD

Unlike women of the less civilized Asiatic tribes, who have a superstitious horror of the camera, African women are generally pleased to pose for the photographer, as was this handsome representative of the native womanhood of Northern Rhodesia

Photo, British South Africa Company

administrative capital, Bulawayo is the largest town and may be taken as a type.

The first thing that strikes one on emerging, hot and dirty, from the wearisome railway journey up from Kimberley, into the brilliant sunlight of a Rhodesian morning, is the enormous width of the streets. The next is the way in which Rhodes dominates this commercial capital of the land he brought to birth. A very fine statue of him stands in Main Street “looking ever to the north”; his picture hangs in every club and house and hotel; and, less than thirty miles out, amid the rugged wilderness of the Matoppos, he sleeps his last sleep under a plain brass plate, bearing the inscription: “Here lie the remains of Cecil John Rhodes.”



NATIVE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF THE FORT JAMESON POLICE

Long before the British Administration came to give the Rhodesian native his police uniform of fez and jacket, and the bandsman's bugle and drum, he had evolved an instrument of his own. It consists of a number of wooden slats after the fashion of a xylophone, and has gourd sound-boxes like the more elaborate "piano" illustrated on page 723. It is found in Central Africa

Photo, British South Africa Company

let into the living rock, and guarded by eight to ten gigantic boulders. Beside this tomb are Jameson's grave and the Shangani memorial to Wilson's men, and beyond, miles on miles of tumbled rocky hills of fantastic shapes and colour shimmering away into the blue haze of distance, combine to render this hilltop one of the most impressive on earth.

As in most African towns, the hotels of Bulawayo might be bettered, but the Club is beyond reproach, most comfortable and hospitable, and it is hardly necessary to add that it possesses a racecourse, athletic grounds

galore, theatres, schools, hospitals, and taxies—indeed, all the paraphernalia of an English town, rickshaws being the only exotic touch.

Even to-day the greater part of the country is Africa unsubdued. For instance, one walks out of a really first-rate hotel, eighteen hours by rail from Bulawayo, and comes suddenly on that apotheosis of nature, unconquered and unconquerable, the Victoria Falls. There is little doubt that these falls are the finest natural sight in the world, but their very magnitude makes them almost impossible to describe. Rows of figures—stating that Heaven

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knows how many million gallons of water per hour fall 450 feet from a cliff a mile wide into a chasm about 100 yards across, that the spray thereof rises 700 feet into the air and the noise thereof can be heard ten miles away—will convey but little to the English reader; he will be more impressed if he realizes that the distance from one bank to another is as from the British Museum to the Marble Arch, and that the depth of the chasm is greater than the greatest height of S. Paul's; and this will give him no conception of the awful splendour of these titanic falls, of the fairy beauty of the myriad rainbows in the spray, or the roar of "the smoke that thunders" as the natives call it.

As one gets farther north, so civilization grows weaker, maintaining but a precarious existence along the railway and vanishing altogether in the marshes

of Lake Bangweolo, along the "fly"-infested banks of the Luapula and in the uplands of the Tanganyika plateau.

The diversities of Rhodesian scenery are too great to admit of generalisation; and the same may be said of her peoples. For the frontiers of Rhodesia contain within them a vast number of Bantu tribes who, while having much in common, are yet unmistakeably separate entities. In Southern Rhodesia the most important of these are the Matabele. About a century ago a band of Zulus, wearied of the tyranny of their king, settled in what is now Southern Rhodesia, easily subduing the previous inhabitants and having it all their own way until the British came and subdued them in their turn, none too easily, as the Matabele wars of 1893 and 1896 prove, since when they have settled down well. In physique



BLACK AND WHITE CANOES FOR HUNTING THE HIPPO

Hunting the hippopotamus in the Zambezi has its thrills in the narrow native canoes. Like those of Lake Tanganyika referred to in page 662, these canoes are dangerously unstable. The superiority of the white man's "canader" itself, as illustrated in the photographs in page 1134, an improvement on the Red Indian canoe, is well seen in this photograph taken near Livingstone



IN THE SQUARE AT LIVINGSTONE, NORTH RHODESIA'S EMBRYO CAPITAL

Situated some four miles from the Zambezi river's left bank, Livingstone has replaced Fort Jameson as the administrative headquarters for Northern Rhodesia. It has, besides the Government buildings, a hospital and an hotel, the last seen to the left of the photograph. The railway from Cape Town to Elizabethville runs within a mile, this line forming part of the Cape-to-Cairo system. The houses seen above, with their corrugated iron roofing, are a common kind in this part of Africa, being quickly and easily erected

the Matabele, as might be expected from their origin, are a fine, up-standing, and courageous race; their language is practically identical with that of the Zulus, and they brought with them and have retained—subject, of course, to modifications imposed by the white man—many of the laws and customs of the parent stock. Children are always welcome, and birth-control, as a movement, is not likely to make much headway in Matabeleland. As in all African tribes, the women do the manual work.

In North-Western Rhodesia there is no outstanding tribe; the Barotse, away on the banks of the Upper Zambezi; the Mashukalumwa, unique in that they fight at night-time; the Bakonde, great hunters; the Balunda, up in the Northern frontier, all approximate pretty much to the ordinary Bantu type in its primitive state. They live in conical huts with a low door and no window, and spend their lives—here, again, the women do all the manual work—eating, sleeping, hunting, and talking, especially talking.

Native Life in Native Setting

As far as costume goes, nature clothes them—with the assistance of bark and skins; and though the natives are eager enough to acquire some cast-off article of white attire, particularly the, to them, entirely useless hat, their real pride is in their hair, which they shave, cut, and tease into various patterns, according to their tribes. Their feeding arrangements, too, are strange to English ideas, consisting usually of one meal per diem in the evening, generally merely grain. But the native loves meat and, given the chance, will gorge himself till he can hardly see, without apparent after-effects; nor is he particular about its condition or quality, as anyone who has seen a crowd of natives literally burrowing inside a long dead hippo can testify.

Their religion is practically confined to their fear of spirits, which they hold

responsible for practically every ill that flesh is heir to, and propitiate on every possible occasion.

Among these tribes the Awatwa deserve special notice. They live in a sort of African Venice in the great Lukanga Swamp, their homes floating huts of reeds and clay, their sole method of transport the dug-out canoe, their intercourse with neighbouring dry-land tribes limited to the exchange of fish for grain. They are, indeed, amphibious to such an extent that, while the story commonly believed by the surrounding natives that they are web-footed is, of course, untrue, their feet are so soft as to be practically useless.

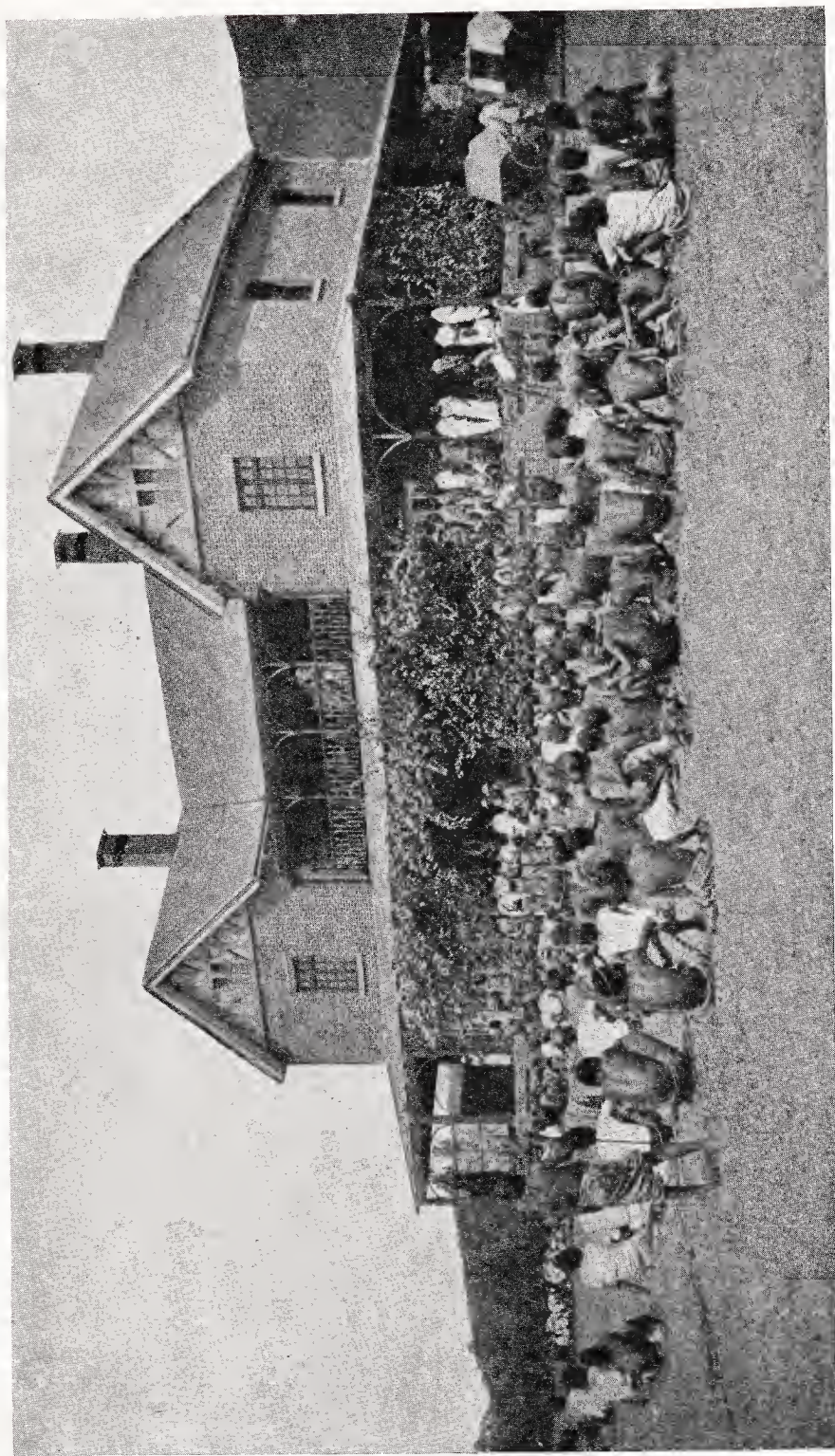
Former Lords of Tanganyika

In North-Eastern Rhodesia there is a similar tribe, the Waunga, dwelling in the deadly, tsetse-haunted swamps round Lake Bangweolo, though these are bolder and more independent than the Awatwa. But in this region pride of place belongs to the Awemba, who were, until the coming of the British, the undisputed lords of the Tanganyika plateau, ruling with a rod of iron and a very thorough organization.

Their king was one of the Wenang' Andu, chiefs of the Crocodile totem, and the system of succession was matriarchal; in other words, the successor must be born of the Nanfumu, princesses of the direct royal line, but the father was unimportant. These kings had a kind of privy council, the Wakabiro, in the capital, and delegated their authority to the Wasimupelo, Lords of the Barriers, and the Walashi, district officers, in the provinces.

An Epitome of All Africa

Much of this tribal organization and native law, improved and amplified, has been retained by the white administrators, and the Awemba, judiciously handled, have, like the Matabele and so many of the fighting races of Africa, settled down remarkably well under British rule. They, too, are a fine-looking race, brave and adventurous,



BRITISH JUSTICE FOR NATIVE PLAINTIFFS AT FORT JAMESON'S GOVERNMENT HOUSE

For the settling of disputes and the hearing of grievances, periodical "indabas," a word of Bantu origin, signified any conference of importance among the "indunas," or chiefs of Kafir tribes. Since, it has come to mean a gathering such as this to which natives come from far and near. Native confidence in the expectation of fair dealing towards the Rhodesian Executives' administrative methods, which have demonstrated their superiority over the old tribal system, as these periodical gatherings indicate.

Photo, British South Africa Company

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making good porters (though the Amambwe are better station-workers), and are very intelligent; their extraordinarily elaborate language alone proves that. They are honest, too, like most unsophisticated Africans, with an honesty that puts the European to shame, and faithful. On the other hand, they are undeniably sensuous and cruel and, above all—the curse of Africa—utterly unambitious. The native has no definite aim in life except the negative one of enjoying himself in his own way, with the result that his huts, foods, and customs have remained practically unaltered for centuries.

Besides black and white, there are other inhabitants of Rhodesia, though alas! rapidly becoming extinct—the game. Within the memory of man vast herds roamed over all the country; now one can travel for miles in Southern Rhodesia and not see a single head. But in Northern Rhodesia game still abounds,

and the system of expensive licences promises to save it from extinction. Elephants, rhinoceros, buffalo, hippopotami, lions, and leopards represent the big game, while among the smaller varieties, eland, zebra, waterbuck, puku, kudu, the rare sitatunga, sable, roan, and other antelopes, to say nothing of crocodiles, wart hogs, and wild dogs, are all to be found.

Rhodesia has something of everything. Within its borders the traveller may see civilization past and present, flourishing and unknown; dwell anywhere from a first-class hotel to a jigger-haunted native hut; pursue any sport, from golf to tracking a wounded buffalo through dense bush, and meet every kind of native from the sophisticated "boy" of the townships and mines to the timid savage of the Lukanga Swamp. It is, in short, an epitome of all Africa.

Rhodesia was to become a self-governing colony in the autumn of 1923.



AMONG THE LOVELY PARKLANDS OF THE MATOPPO HILLS
Rhodesia is beautified by large areas of the parklands whose origin has excited the curiosity of many travellers in Africa. A single euphorbia succeeding in establishing itself in an arid soil casts a shade in which other vegetation springs up, radiating thence until, finally, there are large green expanses studded with clumps of trees resembling the parks that are a chief beauty of the English countryside



RUMANIA : YOUNG HIGHLANDERS PERFORMING A COUNTRY DANCE ACCOMPANIED BY A GYPSY FIDDLER
 A Rumanian national dance, almost as popular in some districts as the Hora, is the so-called De brâu, danced almost exclusively by men, though women can join in some of its varied figures. The dancers usually have their hands on each other's shoulders or one hand in the neighbour's girdle ; it is a lively, vivacious performance, danced in a bow-shape or a closed circle, in which foot-and-beel play is much in evidence. The music is chiefly supplied by those wild children of nature, the gypsies, without whose strange, sweet melodies no feast, birth, wedding, or death of the peasant community would be complete